

South Rise Primary School

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Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to share some important updates about changes to the Ofsted inspection framework, which came into effect in November 2025.

Ofsted will no longer give schools one overall grade like “outstanding”, “good”, “requires improvement” or “inadequate”. Instead, schools will receive a new report card with grades across several different areas.

These new grades are:

- Exceptional
- Strong Standard
- Expected Standard
- Needs Attention
- Urgent Improvement

Ofsted have explained that these new grades cannot be directly compared with the old ones. For example, “requires improvement” does not mean the same as “needs attention”, and “outstanding” is not the same as “exceptional”. The grade “needs attention” is designed to be helpful and advisory. It means that a school needs to make improvements in that area to reach the expected standard. It is not a failure. Instead, it identifies an area of focus for the school where they will need to make changes to secure the expected standard in the future.

Ofsted inspects the following areas in schools:

- Safeguarding (schools either meet these standards or not)
- inclusion
- curriculum and teaching
- achievement
- attendance and behaviour – See note 1
- personal development and well-being
- early years in schools (where applicable)
- sixth form in schools (where applicable)
- leadership and governance

Note 1. It is important to note that attendance and behaviour are now judged as one area. There are clear indicators set out in the OFSTED tool kit relating to attendance. This

means that schools may have very good behaviour and attitudes, but if attendance is not consistently at or above national expectations judgements in this area are limited and can lead to a 'needs attention' grading.

Ofsted's expectations remain high, and the bar has been raised again. Under the new framework, most schools are expected to be graded at the "expected standard". This means the school is providing a good, effective education and doing everything it should be doing in that area. Some schools may receive "strong standard" in certain areas. Very few schools nationally are expected to receive an "exceptional" grade. This does not mean the school's quality of provision has declined. In many cases, schools will have improved what they offer pupils, but Ofsted's criteria are now more demanding. The new grades reflect these higher expectations, not a drop in quality. The table below highlights grade distributions in the first round of inspections.

	Urgent Improvement	Needs Attention	Expected	Strong	Exceptional
Personal Development	1	7	86	80	1
Inclusion	2	12	84	74	3
Leadership and Governance	2	15	109	46	3
EYFS	1	19	114	40	1
Attendance and Behaviour	1	18	99	56	1
Curriculum and Teaching	3	27	119	25	1
Achievement	5	37	101	31	1

You can find more information for parents and carers about the new Ofsted framework here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-ofsted-report-cards-and-grades>

We are very proud of our Compass family of schools and their achievements in ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our pupils and young people. We are confident that our schools will be well prepared for their next inspection under the new framework and welcome the opportunity to share the great work that happens on a daily basis.

Yours Sincerely



Katie Cutajar

Headteacher

For and on behalf of The Compass Partnership of Schools